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THE THIRTY-FOURTH

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

HEALTH AND SANITARY

:: CONDITION ::

OF THE

URBAN DISTRICT OF DESBOROUGH

FOR

1925,

BY

HENRY GIBBONS, M.D., C.M.,

Medical Officer of Health; Fellow of the Incorporated Society of
Medical Officers of Health, &c.

Printed by order of the Urban District Council.

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Desborough,

nr. Kettering.

June 1st, 1926.

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Sir,

With reference to yours 1041/10000, I have to inform you that I find errors have occurred in the printed copies of my Annual Report, both in the paragraph page 14, and the Table, page 16, relative to Tuberculosis. The paragraph should read " eight cases of Tuberculosis - 5 Pulmonary and 3 Non-Pulmonary - were notified during the year, while five deaths were registered as due to Pulmonary tuberculosis".

The age periods of the new Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were as follows:-

	M.	F.
15 - 20	1	-
20 - 25		- 2
25 - 35	1	- 1
Totals	2	- 3

The other remaining figures of the Table are correct.

I beg to express my regret for the occurrence of the oversight in question.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd) H. Gibbons,

Med; Officer of Health,

Desborough U.D.C.

The Secretary,
Ministry of Health,
Whitehall.

DESBOROUGH,

3rd May, 1926.



THE DESBOROUGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADY AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to lay before you my Thirty-fourth Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1925.

It is an instruction from the Ministry of Health that the Medical Officer of Health's Report should this year be a survey report, and I shall therefore accordingly review the most outstanding matters that have affected the public health during the past five years.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (acres)	...	...	2,400
Population—Census 1921	...	...	4,106
„ Estimated 1925	...	...	4,344

Physical Features and General Character of the Area.

The nucleus of the town of Desborough is situated on an elevation of ground having a gentle slope towards the south-east. Within recent years there have been wide extentions off the Rothwell, Rushton

and Braybrooke Roads; adjacent to the latter is the area which is being developed as a housing site by the local authority. The lowest point in the district, situated near the bridge on the Rothwell Road, is about 300 feet, and the highest, near the north-eastern boundary, about 478 feet above Ordnance sea-level.

The Ise brook, which forms the south-western boundary of the parish, flows in a south-easterly direction and receives the purified effluent of the Sewage Farm. A section of the general geographical strata affords in regular order Loamy soil, Clayey sub-soil, and Northampton sand resting on a bed of upper lias clay.

Number of inhabited houses (1921)	...	947
Number of families or separate occupiers (1921)	... ..	979
Rateable value	... ..	£14,638
Sum represented by penny rate	...	£60

Social Conditions, etc.

The principal industries of the town are the manufacture of boots and shoes, corsets and cardboard boxes, agriculture, ironstone quarrying and brickmaking.

Vital Statistics.

		TOTAL.	M.	F.
BIRTHS	{ Legitimate	... 73	36	37
	{ Illegitimate	... 1	1	—
	Birth-rate per 1,000, 17·03.			

This rate, though above the average for the past five years, is slightly below the average for England and Wales, and well below the figures that obtained in pre-war years.

DEATHS.

Total, 45. Death-rate per 1,000, 10·35.

The causes of death were :

	M.	F.
Measles 	1	
Influenza 		1
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	1	
Tuberculosis (Respiratory) ...	1	4
Cancer 	4	3
Cerebral Hæmorrhage ...	2	3
Heart Disease 	3	7
Arterio Sclerosis 	1	1
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	1	1
Other Respiratory Diseases ...	1	
Ulcers of Stomach ...		1
Appendicitis 		1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...		1
Congenital Debility, etc. ..	1	1
Other defined diseases ...	4	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	20	25
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Number of women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth	} }	<i>Nil</i>

The death-rate, though somewhat above the five years' average, yet compares favourably with that for

England and Wales of 12·2. It will be noted that Heart Disease and Cancer head the list as causes of death.

Infantile Mortality.

Deaths of infants under one year of age :

LEGITIMATE.	ILLEGITIMATE.	TOTAL.
3	<i>Nil</i>	3

Infantile mortality per 1,000 births, 40.54.

The infantile mortality rate may be regarded as fairly satisfactory, being below the five years' average and also below the general rate for England and Wales, which was 75.

It is noteworthy that there are no deaths to record from infantile Diarrhœa.

General Causes of Sickness.

During the five years there have been no outbreaks of disease occasioning alarm beyond Small Pox, which will be dealt with later. Influenza accounted for much sickness, but has never assumed serious proportions. Latterly, there has been an exacerbation of Rheumatic affections, especially among those whose work lies out-of-doors.

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

I. HOSPITALS.

- (1) Tuberculosis. At Rushden, provided by County Council.
- (2) Maternity. *Nil*.
- (3) Children. *Nil*.

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (4) Fever | } | At Kettering, under arrangement made between Council and Kettering and District Joint Hospital Boards. |
| (5) Small Pox | | |
- (6) General cases are received at Leicester, Northampton or Kettering.

II. AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

- (a) For infectious cases. Motor ambulance located at Kettering.
- (b) For non-infectious and accident cases. A motor ambulance, stationed at the Urban Council yard, and a wheeled litter, located at the Talbot Inn, High Street.

III THE MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRE

meets fortnightly in the Urban Council building. Though much valuable work has been accomplished, yet it is to be regretted that full advantage has yet to be taken by mothers of all that the Centre has to offer.

IV. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

The Medical Officer of Health. Part time.
 The Sanitary Inspector. Whole time.
 The Health Visitor. Whole time

V. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

- (a) A whole-time nurse works in the district under arrangements made between the County and Local Nursing Associations.

- (b) Under arrangements existing between the County Council and Northamptonshire Nursing Association, a special nurse is obtainable for cases of Measles and also for cases of Puerperal Sepsis.

VI. MIDWIVES.

There is no independent midwife practising in the area. The services of the district nurse are available for maternity cases when required.

VII. LABORATORY WORK.

Arrangements are in force whereby certain Bacteriological examinations (*e.g.* in Diphtheria) can be carried out and appropriate Sera supplied at the cost of the local authority. The County Council have also arranged for a gratuitous supply of Serum for Puerperal Fever in necessitous cases.

VIII. LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

Byelaws and Regulations on the following subjects are in force in the district :—(a) Dairies, cowsheds and milkshops. (b) New streets and buildings (new Byelaws adopted 30th November, 1925); offensive trades and slaughter-houses ; nuisances.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

I. WATER.

A constant supply of water of good quality, though containing much hardness, is available throughout the district, and is obtained from Waterworks comprising

two pumping stations. No. 1 station is located on the Braybrooke Road, in the north-west corner of the district. Water is obtained from a well and heading, sunk 45 feet deep and tapping a natural reservoir formed in the lower portion of the porous stratum, *i.e.*, Northamptonshire sandstone, which lies above the lias clay. A capping of boulder clay above the ironstone in the immediate vicinity of the well renders the liability of contamination by surface water very remote. Sewers and drains are in close proximity to the well, but are adequately protected.

No. 2 station is situated near the old mill in the eastern corner of the district, where a natural reservoir in the sandstone has again been tapped. The water is collected and conveyed to a storage reservoir by means of a Catchment conduit laid in the lias clay. Agricultural land in the vicinity has been a source of some contamination, and at times has caused a certain amount of anxiety, and the provision of a mechanical filter in 1923 has been of great value in permitting the utilisation of most of the available springs.

Periodical examinations of the water from both stations have shown a satisfactory degree of purity to have been maintained, while throughout the year there has been no falling off in quantity.

II. DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE.

The greater portion of the district, including the Council's housing site, is adequately supplied with drains and sewers, which are kept under careful obser-

vation, and, except in times of very heavy rainfall, have given rise to no trouble. On one such occasion there was an overflow from the Rushton Road sewer. The sewage is received at the Sewage Disposal Works, situated off the Rothwell Road. Seventeen acres of land are in actual use for the purification of the sewage. The purified effluent is discharged into the Ise brook. This stream is the only one in the district liable to contamination, but the effluent which it receives has for a number of years maintained a high standard of purity. Owing to the increasing amount of sewage now being received at the works, it is likely that provision of further filters and tanks may become necessary in the near future.

III. CLOSET ACCOMODATION.

The district is well supplied with water-closets, which are all connected with the sewers, but are not supplied with flushing apparatus. In the Rushton Road area, where sewers do not at present extend, the privies in use are either emptied by hand on to the land or discharged into septic tanks.

IV. SCAVENGING.

Movable ash-bins are now provided by all dwelling-houses in the parish, but, unfortunately, many of these consist of wood and have no covering. It is to be regretted that the importance to the public health of the provision of covered galvanised refuse bins is not sufficiently appreciated. All ash-bins are cleared weekly by the Council's workmen and the refuse removed to a

dump off the Harrington Road where it is incinerated. A proper destructor would be of great value for this purpose.

V. SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Systematic inspections of the district have been carried out throughout the year, but no serious nuisances have been detected. I have again to regret that the P.H.A. (A.A.) 1907, still remains unadopted. The following extracts from the Sanitary Inspector's Report are subjoined :—

Nuisances reported during the year	...	125
„ abated	„	125
Statutory Notices served	...	1
„ complied with	...	1

The nuisances referred to the following :

Choked drains	...	81
Dirty w.c's.	...	25
Defective w.c's.	...	7
„ paving	...	2
„ roofs	...	2
Structural defects	...	7
Fowls kept too close to dwelling-house		1

125

VI. SCHOOLS.

The importance of the maintenance of a high standard of sanitation in the schools of the district has not been overlooked, and frequent inspections have been made throughout the year. The system of notification of infectious disease obtaining between head teachers and your Inspector has been maintained.

VII. FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Twenty-four inspections of factories have been carried out and 12 of workshops. The only defects that have come to light have been in connection with defective sanitary accomodation and insufficient ventilation of w.c's., which, on being brought to the notice of the persons responsible, were rectified so far as the existing structural conditions would permit.

Housing.

The past twelve months have seen a marked improvement in the number of dwelling-houses erected, 32 in all having been built. Detailed housing statistics are shown in the Appendix. Most of the cases of serious overcrowding have now been relieved, but there are still a large number of dwellings where there is insufficient sleeping accomodation.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

A wholesome supply of milk has been maintained throughout the year, and inspections of cowsheds revealed no serious cause for complaint.

(b) MEAT.

Frequent inspections of carcasses have not demonstrated the need for any action on the part of the authority. The special regulations re notification of times of slaughtering came into force April 1st, 1925, and its provisions have been satisfactorily carried out by the butchers.

Slaughter-houses have been maintained at a fairly satisfactory degree of cleanliness.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

	In 1920.	In Jan., 1925.	In Dec., 1925.
Registered	3	4	4
Licensed	3	4	4

(c) BAKEHOUSES.

All the bakehouses in the area have been kept under observation from time to time, but no serious defects have at any time been noted.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

(a) GENERAL.

Details of cases of infectious disease occurring during the year will be found in the Appendix. With the exception of Small Pox and Chicken Pox, no disease assumed epidemic proportions.

The year is mainly noteworthy for the fact that the efforts of the Council reached a very satisfactory conclusion by the completion of the arrangements for extending the range of the Kettering Joint Hospital Board to include the Urban District of Desborough. This took effect from October 1st, 1925. I congratulate the Council that the provision of hospital accommodation for the isolation of infectious cases has now become an established fact—a matter to which I have directed attention in my reports for many years.

(b) SMALL POX.

For the first time in the history of the Urban Council an outbreak of Small Pox occurred during the past year, a total of 19 cases being recorded—16 males and 3 females, whose ages ranged from 3 to 69 years.

The first case came under observation on February 28th and was apparently infected from a person belonging to a neighbouring district.

Cases continued to show themselves at varying intervals until May 20th, when the last case was recorded. In order to confirm the diagnosis of the first case, a request was made to the Ministry of Health for the assistance of one of their Medical Officers, in response to which Dr. M. D. Mackenzie was promptly sent down and remained for two days in the town. This official and I spent a long day in interviewing various authorities, and, after much difficulty and largely due to Dr. Mackenzie's invaluable assistance, arrangements were finally made for cases to be accommodated at the Kettering Small Pox Hospital.

In the meantime, it was decided to make use of the present Urban Council Chamber as a temporary isolation hospital—a purpose for which it was originally designed—and, under due precautions, the first case was therein housed.

As a precautionary measure, Chicken Pox was made notifiable in the district for six months. Leaflets

were distributed to all houses, pointing out the advantages of and offering vaccination free of charge.

Known contacts of actual cases were either vaccinated or kept under daily observation for 14 days.

On the notification of each case, the patient was immediately isolated from the rest of the household pending removal to hospital, and thereafter the room and contents were carefully disinfected.

The outbreak was confined mainly to two factories, in which as thorough a process of disinfection as possible was undertaken at the owners' expense. It is, however, my considered opinion that the spread of the disease would have been considerably lessened had full advantage been taken of vaccination.

The cases were all of a comparatively mild character and no mortality has to be recorded.

This period was one of great anxiety for me, and not without the occurrence of difficult incidents necessitating the display of much tact.

I am much indebted to the Council and its officers for the whole-hearted way in which they co-operated with me in taking those precautions so necessary for the public health.

(c) SCARLET FEVER.

Seven cases of Scarlet Fever occurred, mostly of a fairly mild type, one of which was admitted to hospital. There were no deaths.

(d) DIPHTHERIA.

Again only one case of Diphtheria occurred, this was nursed at home and terminated in recovery.

(e) TUBERCULOSIS.

Six cases of Tuberculosis were notified during the year, equally divided between Pulmonary and Non-Pulmonary, while five deaths were registered from Pulmonary Tuberculosis. It is to be regretted that this disease shows no signs of diminishing in incidence or in violence.

I am, Lady and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HENRY GIBBONS,

Medical Officer of Health.

APPENDIX.

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR YEAR 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year :

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under b)	32
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :	
(I) By the local authority ...	10
(II) By other bodies or persons ...	21

1. UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

Inspection :

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	197
(2) Number of dwelling-houses inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	<i>Nil</i>
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	<i>Nil</i>
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	23

2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local authority or their officers ...	23
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS ... *Nil*

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS)
DURING THE YEAR 1925.

DISEASE	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small Pox 	19	19	
Scarlet Fever 	7	1	
Diphtheria 	1		
Pneumonia 	2		1
Erysipelas 	3		
Acute Polio Myelitis 	1		
Encephalitis Lethargica	1		1
Chicken Pox 	32		

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1925.

AGE PERIODS	NEW CASES.				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year								
1—5				1				
5—10								
10—15								
15—20				1				
20—25	1	2				2		
25—35	1	1			1	2		
35—45	1							
45—55								
55—65				1				
65 and upward								
TOTALS	3	3		3	1	4		

